



Equity Staff Development Strategies

The most successful staff development activities are designed to fit the needs of school districts over time, and begin at the awareness level, such as what is “equity”, what is the school’s role in addressing equity issues (i.e. nondiscrimination and civil rights laws), and where does bias and stereotyping exist in the school district.

An important element of any equity inservice is a discussion of why equity should be important to staff, what the benefits are, and how staff can address equity in their roles of teachers, counselors, and administrators. Another important element is to make sure presenters are knowledgeable about equity issues and sensitive to the needs of staff members.

When considering a staff development activity, include the components of planning, implementing and evaluating. Following are some strategies that can help make your activity successful.

1. Create an equity planning team and involve members in all aspects of a staff development activity, such as developing the list of topics and selecting presenters.
2. Develop a checklist to help in planning the activity. Items should include but are not limited to the following:
 - ☐ Determine staff needs related to equity issues, particularly with respect to retention of nontraditional students.
 - ☐ Identify training objectives (outcomes).
 - ☐ Discuss possible formats (how information will be presented).
 - ☐ Identify possible dates for activity.
 - ☐ Identify potential speakers.
3. Select an appropriate format for the activity, such as
 - A stand-alone equity inservice;
 - A sectional presentation in which equity is addressed as part of a larger inservice, such as recruiting and retaining nontraditional students; or
 - A regional or statewide conference.
4. Design the activity to meet staff needs, i.e. “How will this training help me do a better job in the classroom, as a counselor, as an administrator?” And, remember that adults like to be involved and allowed to share their experiences and participate in solving the problem.
 - Make the participants feel comfortable and at ease.
 - Allow time for introductions to ensure that everyone knows one another.
 - Provide refreshments.
 - Prepare an agenda and send in advance if possible; have another copy available at the in-service activity.
 - Point out locations of restrooms as part of welcome and overview.
 - Ask host (principal, district administrator) to share benefits of training and explain why training will be worthwhile to school district.

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5. Present knowledge (information) upon which the rest of the training is built, such as findings on the impact of sex bias and local, state, and federal laws.
 - Allow time for questions and answers to ensure the participants understand the information being presented.
 - Allow time for discussion among participants as it relates to information being presented.
6. Allow time for practical application of the concepts being taught. This can be done individually or in small groups.
7. Provide staff with guidance in selecting new strategies they can take back to their classrooms concerning equity issues.
8. Conduct evaluations of the staff development activity and include a needs assessment for follow-up training.

Tips and Cautions

1. Structure the activity so people are invited, not ordered to attend.
2. Avoid high stress, nonattentive times like the end of the semester or right before a break, and be sensitive to the climate and timing in the local district as different issues will be of concern.
3. Focus on how equity is and can be infused into curriculum, student learning experiences, classroom space, textbook selection, etc.
4. Carefully select individuals who will do the training. Preview the speaker if possible.
5. Point out how equity staff development can help increase excellence in education and higher achievement for students.
6. Invite people from other schools who have had successes to share their experience.
7. Be aware of the environment where the training is being conducted. Check the facility ahead of time for lighting, electrical outlets, soundproofing, and privacy.

Source: Bitters, Barbara and Susan Foxwell. *Wisconsin Model for Sex Equity in Career and Vocational Education*. Madison, WI: Department of Public Instruction, 1993.